

The Heart of Worship

Session 6

February 23, 2025

The Gathering for Worship

Session Passages: Hebrews 10:19-25; 13:12-15

Hebrews 10:19-22

Connection to the Point. Jesus made it possible for us to come to God.

Background. No one knows who wrote the book of Hebrews since the writer did not identify himself, although some early traditions identified it with Paul. The writer's purpose, however, is clear: he advocated the superiority of Jesus Christ and of Christian faith over the outmoded forms of Judaism, encouraged his readers to reject the old, and warned of the dangers of turning back. Hebrews 10:18 ends the central section of the book. Beginning in 10:19 the writer turned to practical application, using one long single sentence in Greek for all of verses 19-25.

Therefore (v. 19). Previously the writer had shown Jesus to be a better High Priest than the Aaronic priests because He is of the order of Melchizedek (4:1–8:6), that Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant than the Mosaic covenant because He is the Mediator of the new covenant (8:7–9:28), and that Jesus offered a better sacrifice than the many year-after-year offerings because He offered Himself once-for-all (10:1-18). *Therefore* draws a conclusion from all that has preceded in the main body of the book.

Since we have *Having . . . boldness confidence* (v. 19). *Since we have* *Having* introduces two blessings granted to believers through Christ in verses 19 and 21. This first one in verse 19 concerns *boldness* “to enter the sanctuary” *confidence* “to enter the Most Holy Place.” *boldness* “to enter into the holiest” or the Most Holy Place. The second in verse 21 concerns our “great high priest.” Readers were encouraged to maintain their boldness in 3:6 and 4:16.

To enter into the sanctuary *Most Holy Place holiest* (v. 19). Drawing on imagery of the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, this is a reference to the heavenly sanctuary, that is, to the presence of God. The exhortation urges readers to make use of this new direct access to God.

Through *By the blood of Jesus* (v. 19). This is the grounds on which believers have such bold access to enter the *sanctuary* *Most Holy Place holiest*. *The blood of Jesus* emphasizes His sacrificial death on the cross. The writer used the personal name of *Jesus* to stress His humanity and His identification with those for whom He died (2:14).

He has inaugurated for us *Opened for us* **He hath consecrated for us** (v. 20). The writer used the same word in 9:18 (“inaugurated” “put into effect” “dedicated,” the only other place the word is used in the New Testament) for the establishment of the Mosaic covenant. The word means “to put into effect” or “to open” in the sense of providing a way not previously available.

A new and living way (v. 20). Two terms describe the *way* Jesus opened into the heavenly *sanctuary* *Most Holy Place holiest* for believers. It is *new* because this way did not exist before. It is *living* because it is based on the living One who Himself is life (John 5:26; 14:6) and who is the risen living Lord (Rev. 1:18). The word for *new* is used only here in the New Testament and emphasizes “freshness” or “recentness” in contrast with that which is old. A *new* and qualitatively different way of access to God, a fresh way that will not become old and outdated, has been established.

Through the curtainveil (v. 20). The *curtainveil*, or curtainveil in the earthly tabernacle and temple separated the holy place from “the most holy place” or “inner sanctuary” (Ex. 26:33). Behind the curtain was the ark of the covenant with the place of atonement. Only the high priest could enter this sanctuary, and only on one day of the year—the Day of Atonement—and then only after a cleansing ritual and with sacrificial blood of an animal (Heb. 9:6-10). The *curtainveil* thus had a twofold meaning or function: On the one hand, it was an *obstacle* that prevented worshipers from entering into God’s presence; on the other hand, it was the *entrance* into God’s presence. This curtain was torn in two from top to bottom at Jesus’s death (Mark 15:38).

That is, through his fleshbodyThat is to say, his flesh (v. 20). Points to Jesus’s sacrificial death while also affirming His bodily incarnation. The new way of access to God is through the torn flesh (the death) of Jesus.

An great high priest (v. 21). Literally, “a great priest.” The imagery refers to the high priest of the Old Testament who entered the sanctuary one day a year to represent the people before God. He was the *great high priest* because he was “highest among his brothers” (Lev. 21:10). The exhortation of Hebrews 10:22 recalls 4:14-16 that also identified Jesus as “a great high priest.”

Over the house of God (v. 21). *The house of God* is the church, the Lord’s people (3:6). That our High Priest is *over the house* contrasts with the place of Moses in 3:1-6, “a servant in all God’s household in all his house, as a servant,” versus Christ, “a Son over his household the Son over God’s house a son over his own house.”

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faithLet us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith bringsLet us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (v. 22). The exhortations *let us* (vv. 22,23,24) focuses on faith, hope, and love respectively. The writer included himself—*let us*. This first exhortation focuses on the twofold *manner* in which believers are to *draw near* to God and the *basis* upon which they have this privilege. To *draw near* involves the entire orientation of a believer’s life. The present tense emphasizes a continuous action. As to the manner, first, it is to be *with a true sincere heart*. This expresses sincerity and genuineness. *A true sincere heart* is ready to obey the Lord. *In full assurance of faith* *With the full assurance that faith brings* relates to the manner in which believers are to approach God—with *full* trust and devotion.

Our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscienceHaving our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscienceHaving our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (v. 22). The *basis* upon which believers can approach God is what has happened in the past because of Christ’s redemptive work. Both expressions in verse 22 refer to the same event—their conversions. *Hearts sprinkled to cleanse* picks up imagery from several Old Testament events. When Moses inaugurated the covenant at Mount Sinai, he sprinkled the people with blood (Ex. 24:3-8)—an event the writer of Hebrews already referred to in 9:18-22. When the high priest and other priests were consecrated to their service, they were sprinkled with water and blood (Ex. 29:4,21; Lev. 8:6,30). Hard and unclean *hearts* need spiritual renewal and *an evil guilty conscience* needs cleansing. *Sprinkled to cleanse* is perfect tense, indicating a one-time unrepeatable act that has ongoing effects.

Our bodies washed inwith pure water (v. 22). Washing with water was part of the priestly dedication (Ex. 29:4) and of the high priest’s ritual before entering the holy of holies (Lev. 16:2-4). *Pure water* was used for purification (Num. 8:5-7). In Hebrews 10, this past act of divine washing refers to spiritual conversion, not baptism. *Washed* is perfect tense, indicating a one-time unrepeatable act with ongoing results. *Our bodies* refers to the whole person, not merely the outer being.

Hebrews 10:23-25

Connection to the Point. We are to encourage each other in our walk with Christ.

Let us hold on to the confession of our hope **Let us hold . . . to the hope we profess** **Let us hold fast the profession of our faith** (v. 23). The second of the chapter's *let us* exhortations (vv. 22,23,24) repeats the writer's warning of 3:6,14; 4:14 and focuses on the steadfastness of believers. *Hold on fast* is the same verb as in 3:6 and 3:14 about holding on to confidence. *Confession* *Profession* (literally, "confession of hope") could refer to the doctrinal truths of the faith (as probably in 4:14), or to the hope one has professed (as in 3:1; 6:18). *Hope* Hope in biblical terminology is not "hopefulness" or "wishful thinking." Rather, it is a sure and steadfast confidence in God and His promises—as stated in the next words (see also 3:6; 6:11,18-19; 7:19; 11:1).

Without wavering **Unswervingly** (v. 23) refers to being "firm," "steadfast," "stable," "remaining upright," "unswerving" or "unwavering," or "unbending." James referred to a person who experienced serious doubts about his faith as "double-minded and . . . unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8). The thought here is of steady perseverance.

Since **For he who promised is faithful** **For he is faithful that promised** (v. 23). This is the basis upon which believers can hold to their hope without wavering—God's faithfulness to keep His promises (11:11) and that He does not lie (6:18).

Let us consider . . . one another (v. 24). The third of the *let us* exhortations focuses on Christian relationship responsibilities. *Consider* means to reflect on. It is a call to focus one's mind. The fact that the call was necessary indicates this exhortation easily could be neglected. *One another* points to the mutual and reciprocal aspects of this exhortation.

To provoke **Spur** (v. 24). *Provoke* *Spur* can be a negative. The only other use of this word in the New Testament is to describe the intense emotion generated between Paul and Barnabas over taking Mark on the second missionary journey in Acts 15:39. There it is rendered "a sharp disagreement" or "contention . . . so sharp." But here the term is used in a positive way—"to motivate" or "to excite" other believers to do two things Jesus commanded: To love one another (John 13:34-35) and to do good works (Matt. 5:16).

Love and . . . good works **deeds** (v. 24). *Love* is the word *agape*—the distinctly Christian God-kind-of-love that is not merely a feeling or emotion but an act of the will that does not depend on the other person's response. The word for *good* the writer used here (*kalos*) refers to that which is beautiful and appropriate, as well as that which is good in itself. *Good works* *deeds* reflect *love* in action in a tangible way (see Heb. 6:10). The writer spelled out what some of these *good works* *deeds* are in 13:1-6.

Not neglecting to gather together **Not giving up meeting together** **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together** (v. 25). It is not possible to provoke other believers to love and good works if you never see them—hence, the admonition of *not neglecting to gather together* *not giving up meeting together* *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*. *Gather* *Meeting* *Assembling* . . . *together* refers primarily to meetings of the church. *Neglecting* *Giving up* *Forsaking* is a strong word that means "forsaking" or "abandoning." The word often is used in covenantal contexts (Deut. 4:31; 31:6,8; Josh. 1:5) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Thus this failure on the part of some was not simply a matter of indifference—it was an abandonment of a key aspect of Christian community.

As some are in the habit of doing **As the manner of some is** (v. 25). Apparently, for some unstated reason, *some* had fallen into *the habitmanner* or habit of not gathering regularly with other believers. *HabitManner* or “custom,” implies the reason probably was apathy.

EncouragingExhorting each one another (v. 25). *EncouragingExhorting* is a basic way of stimulating or provoking others to “love and . . . good worksdeeds” (v. 24). It includes admonition, warning, reproof, reassurance, and comfort. The writer already stated this in 3:13 as a daily means of helping other believers not fall into sin. In fact, the writer saw this as the purpose of his message (13:22). *Each otherOne another*, as with “one another” in verse 24, emphasizes the mutual aspect of such encouraging.

As youe see the Dday approaching (v. 25). *The Dday* refers to the day of Christ’s return, judgment day, and the events that are articulated in verses 26-31. *Approaching*, or “drawing near,” often is used in the New Testament to refer to this eschatological event (Rom. 13:12; Jas. 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7). *As youe see* means that believers are to read the times because the characteristics of the end time are clear (Matt. 24:33-44; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). Seeing *the Dday approaching* provided yet a further incentive for believers to continue to gather together on a regular basis.

Hebrews 13:12-15

Connection to the Point. Our faith is strengthened as we corporately look to Jesus and praise His name.

Jesus also . . . suffered outsidewithout the city gate (v. 12). *Jesus also* draws the comparison to verse 11. *Jesus*, His human name, stresses His true humanity. *Suffered* refers to His atoning death and stresses His divinity. *OutsideWithout the city gate* parallels “outsidewithout the camp” of verse 11 and reflects that Jesus’s place of crucifixion was outside the walls of Jerusalem (John 19:17-20).

Sanctify the people bywith his own bloodMake the people holy through his own blood (v. 12). The writer’s mention of Jesus’s death was not for historical reasons but theological. Jesus’s purpose was to *sanctifymake . . . holy*, or to make His *people* holy—a requirement for acceptable worship (Ex. 19:10-11; 1 Sam. 16:5). But the irony is that because of what Jesus did on *unsanctified* ground outsidewithout *the city gate*, He is able to *sanctifymake the people holy*. *ByThroughWith his own blood* refers to Jesus’s atoning death (see Heb. 10:10,29).

Let us, then, go to him outside the campLet us go forth therefore unto him without the camp (v. 13). This is yet another *let us* (see 10:22,23,24; 13:15). The writer not only identified with his readers, *let us*, but sought to lead them in making a decisive commitment. His exhortation for them to *go to him outside the campgo forth . . . unto him without the camp* does not indicate where Jesus is now. He was making a spiritual application, calling for his readers to leave Judaism and its outmoded rituals permanently behind them. *OutsideWithout the camp* was the place where criminals were executed and the remains of sacrificial animals were disposed of (Ex. 29:14; Lev. 24:14,23; Num. 15:35-36; Acts 7:58). This was a place of disgrace, but it also was a place of revelation and of meeting with God. In Exodus 33:1-11, after Moses came down from Mount Sinai and discovered the Israelites were worshiping the golden calf, he pitched a tent “outsidewithout the camp” and the Lord met with him there. Anyone who sought to inquire of the Lord needed to go to the tent that was “outsidewithout the camp.” The words are repeated twice in Exodus 33:7.

Bearing histhe disgrace he bore **reproach** (v. 13). *DisgraceReproach* may be rendered “stigma,” “reproachdisgrace,” or “abuse.” Yet because Jesus figuratively was crucified outside the camp, the writer calls Jesus’s followers to figuratively go outside the camp as well and bear the *disgracereproach*

associated with Him. To bear that *disgrace reproach* was the decision Moses made (11:26), and the one that the readers had already made and were experiencing results of (10:33).

For we do not have an enduring city here For here we do not have an enduring city For here have we no continuing city (v. 14). *For* indicates the negative basis for Jesus's followers to be willing to join Him outside the camp and to bear His disgrace—they had did *not have an enduring city no continuing city* here on earth anyway. An *enduring city continuing city* refers to a stable, durable, and permanent one.

Instead, we seek the one to come We are looking for the city that is to come But we seek one to come (v. 14). *Instead But* indicates We now see the positive basis for Jesus's followers to *seek be looking for* the city *to come*—just like Abraham, who “was looking forward to the city that has with foundations, whose architect and builder is God looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:10)—that is, a heavenly city (11:13-16; 12:22). *Seek Looking for* involves “having a strong desire for” or an “intent expectation” and points to a committed orientation of focusing steadfastly on a goal. *To come* emphasizes the eschatological nature of the future city.

Through him Jesus . . . let us continually offer up to God By him therefore let us offer . . . to God continually (v. 15). *Through By him* refers to Jesus and in the Greek is placed first for emphasis—it is through Him and no other (see John 14:6). With the exhortation *let us* the writer again identified with his readers. *Continually* stands in contrast to the once-for-all offering Christ made (compare the use of the same word in 9:6). The concept is drawn from the Old Testament (Ps. 50:8) where the word was used for the continual burnt offering made every morning and every evening (Ex. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-8). *Continually* further refers to “at all times” and “under all circumstances.” *Offer up* is the language of sacrifice and reflects what Christ Himself did (Heb. 9:14). *To God* is the proper object of sacrifice.

A The sacrifice of praise (v. 15). Even though the final sacrifice for sin has been made, a *sacrifice* still remains—that *of praise* (Rom. 15:9-11; see also 1 Pet. 2:5). Just as Old Testament offerings were accompanied by praise, or thanksgiving (Lev. 7:12, 13, 15), so are those of New Testament believers to be. *Praise* not only refers to singing songs and hymns but includes giving thanks to God, recounting His blessings, and acknowledging His wonderful deeds. *Praise* is the proper response of those who profess the name of God.

The fruit of lips that confess openly profess his name The fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name (v. 15). *The fruit of our lips*, used only here in the New Testament, is based on Hosea 14:2 and refers to praising God (Ps. 119:171). *Confess Profess Giving thanks to his name* is an open declaration of allegiance to Jesus Christ that is stressed elsewhere in the New Testament (Rom. 10:9; 14:11; Phil. 2:9-11).